857 something to do near the village, and when he has gone they call to him, "endele o o o...", and he answers, "o yo o o o mur e mur a ne e nzine bekun nlu si mebo yo mura kue a ba a muge nie a nu" (there is a big man on the road, a phantom with his head down and his feet up and a red mouth). Endele keeps answering until he has done what was asked of him. Usually he comes back before this from fear of the phantom of which he speaks and which he thinks he sees.

892 Puberty, Adolescence. Puberty occasions no ceremony, but from then on the child has the right to eat the take of his hunting and fishing, which was formerly forbidden him. This prohibition is called eki wo.

304 Circumcision is done either before or after puberty. It is an operation which is usually performed for many children at a time, and takes place in the early morning. The operator (nkir) comes to the village without the children's being told, and the fathers who wish their sons circumcised watch them so they do not run away. The children are led behind a hut where pieces of red wood have been prepared. [87] A hole is made in the ground, and the pieces of red wood are put in it and set on fire. Each child sits on the stump of a banana tree. The operator uses a well-sharpened razor. Before the operation he fills his mouth with seeds of wild pimento which he chews. He takes the foreskin of the child in his left hand, pulls it, makes a mark on it with his nail at the place where he will cut. The father of the child sees whether the cut piece will be of the desired size, and if he agrees the operator slices the foreskin with one stroke of the razor and spits the pimento, which he has in his mouth, onto the wound. Then he says, "fam e ne e saga e saga sag mi sag nkili," an obscene expression which it is impossible to translate here. The circumcised child goes and sits near the fire of red wood. The foreskin is placed on top of a banana tree, [362] whose fruit is cooked and eaten by men only. The circumcision is [324] an occasion for rejoicing; it is done so that the children will not die and also to remove the foreskin which keeps a man from being strong.

304 Female circumcision is never practiced any more. It was formerly 481 done to married women of notoriously bad conduct in order to punish them. The woman was fastened to two stakes in the village square. The clitoris was removed by the man who did the circumcising and was then attached by a thread and put around the neck of the woman, who had to keep it that way for several days to her great shame. The

circumcision was public, and the woman to whom it was done underwent the gibes and insults of all the inhabitants.

The life of the young people is the same as that of the adults. The virginity of a woman is considered unimportant and the Fan have sexual relations from the time they are capable of cohabitation. When a young girl has a child, it belongs to her parents, from whom the child acquires wealth; there is no search for the father and the young girl keeps all the respect which she enjoyed. Young girls are free to give themselves to whomever they please. This very broad morality, however, has one important qualification in that there are, so to speak, no young girls, the little girls having been married off by their parents very early, sometimes even before their birth.

Marriage (alug). Men rarely marry before the age of twenty years, and usually later, because they do not have the means to pay the dowry for taking a wife.

Exogamy is always practiced because marriage between people of the same tribe is sterile. Marriage between cousins is forbidden up to the third generation and in general, marriage is forbidden between persons linked by any kind of kinship; in this case there is also prohibition of sexual relations. No penalty is prescribed for infraction, but the guilty ones will fall ill and their children, if they have any, will not live.

Occasionally there are instances when marriage between relatives is authorized, but only after the practitioner has removed the prohibition by the process [88] called abvule minsem. The practitioner goes to find some termite earth (nguege), a plant (mekaja), and a vine (nyola dzik); the plant and vine are folded and placed in an etok (a container of banana leaves) full of water. The termite earth is placed on a nzum (see the description in the section on conception) and the etok is placed underneath. The two kinsmen who want to marry also stand underneath it, while the practitioner climbs onto the nzum, dips the leaves in the etok, and says, "meme ose mi waga bo e wo ma va yüi" (I remove every prohibition that you have made). He hits the termite earth with the leaves and then takes the etok and pours the contents onto the heads of the two people from whom he is removing the prohibition. With the remainder, the man and woman each takes a washing.

A man who has not enough dowry but who finds a young girl eager to marry him may take her away in the night; when the parents come

557 Briault, an accurate observer of the Fang states that the death of
578 a chief, or an old man, or a notable person, is suspect and demands a much more "minute" enquiry than in the case of men of the common people." "Whoever has privileges is envied, whoever exerts authority makes malcontents; many chiefs have died unexpectedly; many who were envied have not made old bones; this must be fairly common since it is confirmed by proverbs (2)...."

2. M. Briault, Sur les pistes de l'A.E.F. [On the Trails of French Equatorial Africa], 1948, pp. 37-38, 42-43.

One might say that "intentional death" threatens (threatened rather, for colonial affairs and peace have allowed some to grow rich and to be protected) those who in their own interest disregard the fundamental solidarity and leveling tendency.

631 [146] By this play of forces, more or less antagonistic and varying according to circumstances, Fang society is protected from any excessive concentration of power. This explains why, in spite of its conquering military nature, it has never allowed even a rudimentary feudal system to appear. Strictly controlled, power was organized only at the level of small units -- a village or a group of villages, relatives or neighbors. It has only exceptionally (and precariously) gone beyond the frontiers of these groupings, and as the "associations" have barely been able to remedy this deficiency, Fang society shows an absolute lack of centralization, which was a contributing factor in its rapid deterioration during the colonial period.

652 In a social system which leaves plenty of room for opposing relationships, cases of judicial action and conciliation play an important part. The Fang have not only established a classification of offenses -- nné, simple disagreement; ôdôm, serious dispute that might result in war; and mêm, ritual infraction -- and a gradation of punishments going up to holding a hostage (ôvôa), but have also conceived a judicial organization with

6. Alexander and Binet--92 G-5 (1946-1954) 1958 FH9 Fang FH9

c. Punishments

The scale of punishments included death, the paternal curse, putting in chains (mbok), fine, and bastinado. To these were added for women removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, injection of piment̀o into the vagina, and public exposure, naked, with legs held apart by the mimbok /pl./ (esamele minga).

The death sentence was carried out so as not to shed blood—which would have made purification necessary—by drowning, strangling, burial alive (the last particularly in certain cases of nsem, like incest), or by burning. If the execution had to be bloody, it was carried out by a captive—a foreigner to the clan—but, in theory, the shedding of blood always had a sacrificial character and was to be avoided on all other occasions.

The death sentence was applied for sorcery and serious minsem (breakings of taboo) such as incest or the killing of a monyañ. For other infractions, compensation was the general rule, either by retaliation or by indemnity, the latter usually being the preferred method. For instance, for a homicide /meurtre/ committed outside the clan, the minôl arbitrators tried to make the killer's family pay blood money, either in goods or by giving a woman in compensation. To this there might have been added some sort of disciplinary corporal punishment within the killer's clan or family. If compensation was not paid, the victim's clan had recourse to retaliation upon any member of the clan or family of the guilty man; responsibility was individual within the family, collective within the clan and tribe.

A fine must be distinguished from the compensation accorded to the victim; it went, in fact, to the nyi'i mejô, perhaps to pay for his intervention. It survives today, though illegal, to the benefit of official and semi-official assessors; it is freely called toya, from Coast English tax, to distinguish it from compensation, ngôô • ransom, redemption.

Placing in chains applied especially to persons considered socially dangerous (it is nowadays used in remote villages for some insane), bastinado to minor crimes committed within the clan. Clitoridectomy was the punishment for adultery and minor incest. The injection of piment̀o was rather a nkal, test or ordeal, than a punishment; it was applied especially to widows after the husband's death to discover whether or not they had been responsible. The use of ordeals, minkal,

was in other respects common. They were administered either by the ntyi'i mejo —esa, ntol, njoo bot, or officer of the ngil or another association—or by a diviner, mvimvi'i, sometimes a specialist in this category of bitom, palavers. The true ordeal had several forms: by a curse uttered over the ancestral grave or the bieti basket; by bitter herbs, alan; by pimento or ants; by boiling water or fire. /72/ Initiations and particularly that for ngil all involved a collective ordeal intended to ward off beyem who might have tried to push their way in. In addition to the ordeal proper, the mvimvi'i could make use of various forms of divining in order to discover presumed culprits. Except for a serious crime, the culprit thus revealed was not forced to undergo an ordeal if he admitted his guilt. Physical ordeals are on the decline; they are considered crimes or delicts in the Penal Code. And ordeal by oath has lost a great deal of its force. Divining remains much in use and is sometimes highly effective (1).

1. An oath may be sworn on a nzo'okak—a little elephant shield containing various medicines, equipped with a strap and worn under the arm. The nzo'okak is not an insignia of authority. Upon the death of its holder it does not pass automatically to the man who becomes head of the family but goes to the one who has a flair for magic. To leap over a nzo'okak laid on the ground means swearing that one has told the truth. The nzo'okak is a guarantee of treaties: after a battle it is placed between the belligerents, who jump over it to vouch for their peaceful intentions. (J. B.)

Among modern punishments, fines and imprisonment are well recognized by the Pahouin and have a definite intimidating power. On the other hand, the subtleties of setting up a public prosecutor /la constitution de partie civil/ are beyond many peasants, who thus lose the possibility of receiving damages that custom would have given them. Above all, the Napoleonic interpretation of crimes and delicts remains pretty well foreign to Pahouin norms, for example, in judging an insult as a mere transgression even when directed to an

ascending relative. These /factors/ explain the success and persistence of parallel judicial processes, which are illegal from the point of view of European law, although sometimes tolerated by the administration.

d. Delinquency

If the older people are to be believed, delinquency offenses used to be rare: secret societies with their ordeals and swift punishments prevented delicts by the fear they inspired. At present the jail books and the judicial statistics make it possible to gauge the dimensions of the phenomenon, but there is no proof that all delinquents are prosecuted. Some affairs never reach the ears of the law: for instance, fathers of families often deplore the immorality of their sons or their wives, whom they accuse of stealing from them, but since no complaint is lodged, these facts are not recorded.

It is usual in Africa to complain of the rise in juvenile delinquency. The figures at my disposal do show an increase:

	18 yrs.	18 - 20 yrs.	20 - 25 yrs.	25 - 30 yrs.	30 - 35 yrs.	Over 35 yrs.	Total
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
1936	3	3.5	19	32	18	25	100
1946	-	10	21	35	15	14	100
1956	7	7.2	25	22	15	24	100

/72/ But this increase is not as great as might have been feared. A study of the statistics allows another conclusion: delinquency is an urban phenomenon. In fact, only people following city occupations are found in the jails. In a region of primarily agricultural activity, a relatively low number of rural delinquents is remarkable. Admittedly we must recognize that in towns law enforcement is easier, also that the more Westernized townsmen do not hesitate so much to make use of the courts. Nevertheless, the difference between the delinquency rates of different occupations deserve to be pointed out, although the figures below are, of course, only approximate. They were obtained by a study of the census returns for three towns in the southern Cameroons and by a comparison of the jail books for the same localities.

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

372 484 log from the last town where the caravan rested. This man kept the piece of wood burning by gently swinging it backward and forward, while marching along the path with his load. On one occasion I timed a native, and when we reached the next stopping place, after a three hours' tramp in the rain, the brand was still burning brightly, and it had been frequently passed from one end of the caravan to the other so that all who desired could light their pipes from it.

372 765 The Fang use fire in the *ceremony of going out of mourning*. I witnessed this ceremony once at Foulabiding. The widows of an old headman had put in the regular time of mourning and were now to be released. There were seven widows in all, three of middle age, and four young girls. A small fire of leaves had been lighted in the centre of the street, and on each side of the fire stood several young men armed with switches. The widows wore a very slender loin cloth. At a given signal the widows rushed toward the fire and bounded through it, the young men switching them as they passed, but the switches were not used severely. Immediately after the switching each widow seated herself on the ground holding a bunch of burning leaves under her feet, while a young man shaved their heads with a sharp trade knife. On inquiry regarding this ceremony, I obtained the [785] following information: Passing the fire *cleans* them after mourning (evidently considered a means of purification). Switching reminds the widows of their duty to the man who inherits them or his wives. Burning has two meanings: firstly, the pain caused is endured as a last act of mourning for the departed; second, it signifies that henceforth the widows walk a new path (enter upon a new life).

372 121 Fire has a place in Fang religion or belief. The sun is considered the *nsis* (father) of all heat, and the original maker of all fire, whether by friction, matches, powder, or lightning. When a severe thunderstorm is at its height, the native say of the lightning, "that the sun has hid his face and is shooting fire, because he is angry." The native word for sun is *fo*. Although the palaver house fire is kept burning, still, no special effort is made to keep it alight; should it go out, any person present is at liberty to rekindle it from newly produced fire.

VII.—Customs.

671 The Fang have no system of law, no judge or tribunal for punishment of crime. Theft, murder, offences against the person are all settled according to native custom.

628 ●671 Example: A Fang of the Esisis clan steals goods or a woman from a Fang of the Ngo clan. The Ngo who has been wronged does not go to the offender for settlement, he goes to another near town and shoots the first goat he sees in the street, or if very angry, he may shoot a woman. The owner of the goat or woman demands of the Ngo his reason for doing so. The Ngo replies, "An Esisis" (giving the man's name) "has wronged me; I put the palaver (his offence) on you." The third party then goes to the Esisis and says, "An Ngo" (giving the man's name) "has shot my goat (or woman) because you have made trouble with him; he has put *your* palaver (trouble) on me. You must pay me!" The original offender is

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 F319 Fang F319

new responsible and liable to two parties; if he is reasonable they all meet and talk the palaver. If the palaver is serious, each party appoints his *nlâ* (ambassador). The palaver is usually talked in the main street of the town, before all the representatives of the interested clans, and before all strangers in town. The Fang are born orators, and remarkable gestures and orations are made while talking the palaver. The speaker usually walks backwards and forwards grasping and leaning upon a "palaver stick." He commences with: *M'wom* (I say thus); when speaking for another he says *A'wom* (he says thus); when speaking for the people of his town, *Be wom* (they say thus). Sometimes the *nlâ* (ambassador) sit in a canoe in the middle of a river or a stream, and talk the palaver, the injured parties being on either side of the stream. The case is talked, the goods demanded in payment stated, and an effort made to *bili nsang* (cut or end the palaver). If they succeed, then the palaver is *ewi* (ended), and a dance follows; if no opponent is come to, the meeting breaks up and a tribal war exists between those clans.

Salutations.

There are three salutations common to all. Two friends meet, they each grasp the arm of the other, high up on the biceps; a slight pause is made, then the hand is slipped down to clasp the wrist. This is also the customary salutation used by the Bulu.

Two friends meeting salute by embracing.

A traveller entering the *ebeng* (palaver house) walks over to the headman and sits on his knee a moment, at the same time placing one arm around the headman's neck.

Hospitality demands that all strangers be served food by the town women to strangers in the *ebeng*.

Wives are loaned to guests.

Coarse conversation is indulged in by old and young of both sexes.

Considerable license prevails among the unmarried; less so among the married.

VIII.—*Invention, Natural Forms, Conservatism.*

Invention.—The arts in use are common to all the different clans of the great Fang tribe. *Any* new discovery as the working of iron is credited to the dwarfs or *ngui*. The natives are always ready to admit that the *ngui* are very clever; they have a saying "no person knows like a mere *ngui* (dwarf) what is inside the forest." When obtainable the natives use an imported saw, or file, and admit its superiority over their own crude tools. A Fang may be impressed at the knowledge and power of the white man, but is not greatly surprised; the reason for this is that many white men are credited with possessing supernatural powers.

Some of the clubs, tools and weapons approximate to the natural forms of the branches or roots of trees. Axe handles and the handle of a certain kind of adze have